

sector to strengthen their efforts to promote safety and health programs among our Nation's farm and ranch workers. I ask agricultural workers to take advantage of the many diverse education and training programs and technical advancements that can help them avoid injury and illness. I also call upon our Nation to recognize Wednesday, September 22, 1999, as a day to focus on the risks facing young people on farms and ranches. Finally, I call upon the citizens of our Nation to reflect on the bounty we enjoy thanks to the labor and dedication of agricultural workers across our land.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:16 a.m., September 21, 1999]

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**Proclamation 7225—National
Historically Black Colleges and
Universities Week, 1999**

September 17, 1999

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have provided a crucial avenue to educational and economic advancement for African American youth for more than 150 years. These institutions, dedicated to equality and excellence in higher education, have their roots in a segregated society; their survival in the face of limited financial resources or outside support stood as a beacon of hope for generations of African Americans.

While our society has changed in the intervening decades, the need for these institutions has not. Our Nation's HBCUs have as-

sisted African American and other students from low-income communities in achieving their educational goals and reaching their full potential, while keeping tuition costs affordable. The vast majority of African Americans with bachelor's degrees in engineering, computer science, life science, business, and mathematics have graduated from one of the 105 Historically Black Colleges and Universities. According to the Department of Education's National Center for Educational Statistics, HBCUs conferred 28 percent of all bachelor's degrees awarded to African American graduates in 1996, although enrollment at HBCUs constituted only 16 percent of all African American college students.

In addition to giving students the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in today's challenging global economy, HBCUs also offer students leadership opportunities that build self-confidence, a nurturing learning and social environment, and networks of successful alumni who serve as positive role models and mentors for graduates. Cultural programs and educational outreach to minority- and low-income areas in our Nation help preserve African American heritage and make HBCUs a source of pride and knowledge for the communities they serve.

By serving the African American community, HBCUs serve all Americans. These institutions embody many of our most deeply cherished values—equality, diversity, opportunity, and hard work. HBCUs prepare talented young men and women to succeed in every sector of our economy. And the alumni of HBCUs have contributed immeasurably to our Nation's success—as scientists, businesspeople, educators, public servants, and so much more. As education and diversity become increasingly important in the 21st century, graduates of HBCUs will continue to be at the vanguard of America's progress.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 19 through 25, 1999, as National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week. I call

upon the people of the United States, including government officials, educators, and administrators, to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities honoring America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities and their graduates.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

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The President's Radio Address

September 18, 1999

Good morning. This month millions of students across America are beginning the last school semester of the 20th century. Today I want to talk about our obligation to give them the education they deserve to succeed in the new century, for more than ever, in this information age, education is the key to individual opportunity and our share of prosperity.

That's why, even though we've worked hard to cut spending to balance the budget, we've also nearly doubled our investment in education and training. Many people said we couldn't do it, but we proved them wrong.

Today, we have the longest peacetime expansion in our history. After years and years of deficits, we now have budget surpluses for years ahead. More people have a chance to realize the American dream than ever before. More children have the chance to realize their full potential than ever before. We've laid a foundation to preserve our prosperity for future generations.

Now, as the budget deadline rapidly approaches this year, we face many of the same tough choices again. And once again, I think the answer is clear: To build a strong nation

in the new century, we must continue to invest in our future. That means we must strengthen Social Security, secure and modernize Medicare, pay off the national debt in 15 years, making America debt-free for the first time since 1835. And once again, it means we must invest in education, not sacrifice it.

Months ago now, I sent Congress a responsible budget to maintain our fiscal discipline and honor our commitment to our children's education. So far, the Republicans in Congress haven't put forward a budget of their own. In fact, they're so busy trying to figure out how to pay for their irresponsible tax plan that they're in serious danger of not meeting their obligation to finish the budget by the end of the budget year. Even worse, they're preparing to pay for their own pet projects at the expense of our children's education.

We know now that the Republicans' risky tax cut would force us to slash vital funding for education by as much as 50 percent over the next 10 years. But what many people don't know is that next year alone, the Republican plan would cut the bill that funds education by nearly 20 percent.

Now, if carried out, this plan would lead to some of the worst cuts in education in our history. More than 5,000 teachers, hired as part of my class size initiative, could be laid off. Fifty thousand students could be turned away from after-school and summer school programs. More than 2 million of our poorest students in our poorest communities would have a smaller chance of success in school and in the workplaces of the future. These aren't just numbers on a balance sheet; they're vital investments in our children and our future.

In a time when education is our top priority, Republicans in Congress are making it their lowest priority. So let me be clear: If the Republicans send me a bill that doesn't live up to our national commitment to education, I won't hesitate to veto it. If it undermines our efforts to hire high-quality teachers to reduce class size or to increase accountability in our public schools, I will veto it. If it fails to strengthen Head Start, after-school and summer school programs, I'll veto it. If it underfunds mentoring or college scholarship programs, I will veto it. If it sends